

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect  
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)  
Cecilia Zalkind, Esq, Chair  
Rita Gulden, MSW, Vice-Chair  
Tuesday, January 14, 2014 - 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
20 West State Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room 219  
Trenton, NJ 08550**

**In Attendance**

Rita Gulden	CASA of New Jersey
Elizabeth Bowman	DCF, Office of Performance Management and Accountability
Lori Morris	CASA of Mercer/Burlington County
Lisa von Pier	DCF, Child Protection and Permanency
Amy Fischer	Administrative Office of the Courts
Mary Hallahan	Upper Freehold Regional School District/Foster Parent
Lisa Nemeth	Department of Law & Public Safety
Linda Porcaro	Somerset Co. Office of Youth Services
Clarence Whittaker	DCF, Children's System of Care

**Staff**

Dawn M. Leff	DCF-NJTFCAN SORS
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**Introduction and Review of Minutes:**

Introductions were made and the November 2013 minutes were reviewed and approved.

**New Business:**

Beth Bowman publically acknowledged the resignation of DCP&P Director Kara Wood and the appointment of Lisa von Pier as DCF Assistant Commissioner of CP&P. In addition Lisa von Pier will represent CP&P on the SORS subcommittee. In regards to staff retention data, Beth will provide as an interim report to the SORS subcommittee.

Next agenda item discussed centered on visitation and review of the questions previously proposed by SORS as well as the answers submitted by DCF. Additional clarifying questions were examined regarding definitions of parents unavailable and the aggregate data. Beth reinforced that the definitions outlined in the response are policy and that staff when documenting one of the reasons must provide supportive, qualitative explanations within the context of the contact note. Discussion also included looking at how long it takes for visitation to begin after a removal episode and whether there is quantitative data that is being measured that would illustrate compliance. There was further discussion around the court order mandate of visitation within the first 45 days as well as questions around the high percentage of contested TPR's and whether appeals were lost due to lack of visitation provided. Lisa Nemeth confirmed that most TPR's are appealed and that although there are some cases that revert back to a reunification, the amount is minimal. The group verbalized that there were additional questions from other group members who were not present. The group agreed there was a need to review the recent Period XIII Monitoring Report to

see if questions could be resolved. After the group reviews the monitoring report, additional questions regarding visitation will be submitted to the SORS staff person so that Beth and Lisa von Pier can prepare responses. This item will be explored at the next meeting in March.

Linda Porcaro reported on the staff survey subgroup activities. This included draft composition of some survey questions. Discussion around who to survey concluded with the need to have brief description of DCP&P staff and job duties to determine a specific subset of staff to target. Additional discussions included utilizing solution focused questions with clarifying terminology and interpretive statements. Discussion of focus areas included caseload versus workload; resources and services as well as training. To assist with focusing on a specific theme it was suggested that round table focus groups would generate conversation with staff regarding their needs. The action plan identified included pulling together staff job descriptions; identify subset of staff for focus groups and then plan around efficient roll out of geographical cross section of staff focus groups with assistance from Lisa von Pier. Staff position and job description list will be submitted by DCP&P to the staff survey subgroup. The group reviewed staff survey examples from other states that were presented at the meeting. Beth will explore whether DCF can request technical assistance on behalf of SORS from the NRC.

Dialogue regarding staff training included range of offerings, supervisory directed training, posttest grading notification to supervisors and concern of trainer's lack of field experience. It was determined that the group would wait for an updated training course catalog and then explore having Robert Ring present an update on the training academy progress at a future meeting. Additional questions regarding training from the subcommittee will be submitted to the SORS staff person so that Robert can prepare responses. Positive feedback was given regarding presentation of workers during Child Placement Review Board Hearings. Feedback included that presentations has greatly improved and that staff are more professional and knowledgeable.

Lisa von Pier spoke about her new role as the Assistant Commissioner of DCP&P as well as her previous roles and experiences. Lisa discussed her vision and direction to include the integration of practice and compliance while re-engaging and invigorating staff and community partnerships

#### **Old Business:**

*CP&P staff training course catalog – has not been received from Robert Ring. Will try to secure for next meeting.*

#### **Next Meeting/Announcement –**

March 11, 2014 at 10am – same location in room 219- Roebling Building, Trenton, NJ